

U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Cuong Gia Le, 27, of Springfield, Virginia, was sentenced today before the Honorable T.S. Ellis, III, United States District Court Judge, to three concurrent and two consecutive terms of life in prison without parole as well as to concurrent sentences of 20 years, 10 years, and 3 years in prison on charges of racketeering, conspiracy to commit murder, two counts of murder in aid of racketeering, attempted murder in aid of racketeering, assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering, conspiracy to commit robbery, and two counts of use of a firearm resulting in murder. Le pled guilty to these charges on October 8, 2004. The life sentences result from Le's role in the May 13, 2001, shootings at the Majestic Restaurant in Fairfax County, Virginia, which resulted in the death of two individuals and the wounding of two others.

Cuong Le is the sixteenth gang member convicted as a result of a three-year investigation of racketeering activity and related violent crimes committed by an Asian racketeering organization led by Le and known as the "Oriental Playboys," or "OPB". Cuong Le and other OPB members and associates have admitted to participating in a number of crimes including murder, attempted murder, and armed robbery, including numerous armed home invasion robberies, as well as burglaries, the distribution of "ecstasy" and crack cocaine, and credit card fraud.

Mr. McNulty stated: Life without parole is truly just punishment for the murder and mayhem caused by this violent criminal. Cuong Le's permanent removal from the streets of our community makes us all safer."

At his plea, Le admitted that as a member and leader of OPB, he participated in an April 6, 2001, home invasion robbery in Montgomery County, Maryland; an April 9, 2001, conspiracy to murder and attempted murder in Falls Church, Virginia; and the May 13, 2001, murder of Binh Anh Luu and Long Phi Nguyen at the Majestic Restaurant in Fairfax County, Virginia. Le also admitted to participating in the January 21, 1997, shooting at the Hi Au pool hall at the Eden Center in Falls Church, Virginia, which resulted in the death of Long Hung Nguyen and the wounding of another individual. Le fled Northern Virginia after the May 13, 2001, Majestic shootings and, with the assistance of OPB members, avoided capture until he was arrested by U.S. Marshals in July 2003 near Seattle, Washington.

On October 5, 2004, in a related matter, Lam Nguyen Chau, age 28, of Cary, North Carolina, pled guilty before the Honorable Claude M. Hilton, United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, to one count of murder in the course of a firearms offense. Chau pled guilty to his involvement in the January 21, 1997, shooting at the Hi Au pool hall at the Eden Center in Falls Church, Virginia. Chau was the driver of the van used by three other gang members who shot and killed the manager of the Hi Au pool hall over a fight that had occurred at the pool hall earlier that day. Chau was sentenced on February 11, 2004, to 20 years imprisonment for his participation in that murder.

These cases are two of several related cases involving Asian organized crime and gang activity that have been investigated by federal, state and local authorities and prosecuted by the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia over the past nine years. This concerted effort has resulted in the arrest and conviction of over 70 individuals involved in dozens of violent crimes, drug trafficking, gun offenses, and other related criminal activities.

This investigation has involved special agents, officers, and analysts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, United States Marshals Service, the police departments from the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, Montgomery County (Maryland), Virginia Beach, City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Baltimore County, Chesterfield County (Virginia), and the Virginia State Police. The Arlington County and Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorneys, and the Montgomery County State's Attorney also provided valuable assistance during the investigation. The Cuong Le and Lam Chau cases are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys James L. Trump, Kimberly Riley Pedersen and Michael Leiter.

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